

Shameless

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Shameless by jeongshook

Category: IT (2017), IT - Stephen King

Genre: Alternate Universe - High School, Alternate Universe - Rock Band, M/M, Reddie, dsfkscdkj i just need to write this okay, preppy! eddie, punk!richie, rated for language and mature themes for now but ill add more tags as i go on, side stenbrough

Language: English

Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Mike Hanlon, Original Characters, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris

Relationships: Bill Denbrough/St Stanley Uris, Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2017-10-02

Updated: 2017-10-31

Packaged: 2020-01-30 20:43:56

Rating: Mature

Warnings: Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Chapters: 3

Words: 6,184

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Richie Tozier, 17, lead guitarist of your resident small town alt-rock band Gifted just wants to make it big as a musician.

Eddie Kaspbrak, also 17, resident pretty boy of Derry High School just wants to live for once in his fucking life.

1. One

“I want to fuck off from this town,” Bev puffs her cigarette. The smoke is hitting Richie’s face but he doesn’t mind. “As soon as possible.”

Richie inhales more smoke from his own; they’re sitting on the hood of his car, a beat-up red ’72 Chevy Nova bought from the money he scraped together from his summer jobs. Nicely put, it’s a piece of shit but it’s *his* you know? It’s the one thing he can call entirely his own, the only thing he has that doesn’t have anything to do with his father or his mother. He and Bev come up a lot to the hill on the outskirts of Derry – it has a nice spot where you can see most of the town and even the sunset if you come at the right time – just to smoke and listen to music or to talk or write some lyrics. They’re a good team, Bev and him. He writes the lyrics and Bev sings them, she has this raw, raspy voice that really goes with the alt-rock, punk style they’re going for. Richie is sure most of their audience come to see them perform because of her. Not just her voice – she’s also a babe with her fiery red hair and ripped clothes and this carefree attitude she has. There’s just something about her that draws people in.

It is a shitty town though, Derry. There are little to no pubs or places to actually perform at; the gigs they get are mostly in bigger cities around the area. They normally use Richie’s shitty car to transfer their equipment and the band – and don’t get him wrong, it’s not that he *hates* Derry, it’s just... well it’s boring. He sees the bigger towns, cities, they go to Portland for a battle of the bands type of thing and it just buzzes with energy, it’s full of life. People are out on the streets at night (something you rarely see in Derry) having fun and going to clubs and Richie is totally captivated. He wants nothing more than to move to a big city and play music, make it big.

So, if Beverly Marsh wants to leave town he can totally understand it, hell, he even agrees. She is his best friend and partner in crime; if she leaves, Richie knows he’ll leave too. They’re too good of a team to give that up.

“Me too,” he answers, looking over the houses which start to light up slowly as it gets darker. “First in two years though – I’m going to

finish high school first. My folks never did, y'know. I won't end up like them."

Beverly pulls her knees up and hugs them to her chest, resting her head on her arms. "Of course you won't. You're already so much more, Richie."

"Right," he puts his cigarette out before jumping off the car. "Let's head back, it's getting dark."

*

It's Friday the next day, just before the weekend of yet another shitty local concert – there are not going to be many people, and most of them will be their friends, but a gig is a gig. Who knows, maybe there are some tourists passing by who might drop by for a few songs, spread the word.

"Mike!" Richie exclaims as he throws a hand around his friend's shoulder. "You coming tomorrow?"

They shake hands. "Of course. I like the flyer by the way," he says and holds the piece of paper up. It's a copy of the flyer Ben made, it looks very punk rock if you ask Richie with the red background and all the scribbles, the word *Gifted* written in fat letters on the top – Beverly came up with the band name after days of fruitless brainstorming.

"Nice. Come a little early so we can set up the place yeah?" He asks, waiting for Mike to nod in approval but then averting his gaze. "Yo Eddie!"

Eddie, who is walking towards them with precise, calculated steps just sighs and rolls his eyes. "Do you have to shout first thing in the morning, Tozier?" He complains when he gets closer to the group.

"You could be used to it after all this time," Beverly laughs, looking up at her friends from where she's sitting on the staircase that leads up to the entrance. She grew her hair out so it is shoulder-length now, pulled back into a curly ponytail today.

"Are you coming to watch us play tomorrow, Eddie Spaghetti?"

Richie turns back to his friend. "I heard your mom was."

Eddie doesn't even address the joke because 1.) it's too early for Richie's shit and 2.) he's been hearing it all his life.

"If I can sneak out," he answers after a moment of hesitation, looking down.

"Of course you can," Bill, who looks extremely tired, assures him. "You've done it a hundred times."

Eddie knows he has, but he also knows how his mom is. He just wants a normal life where he can go out with his friends and have fun without having to risk breaking an arm because he has to *climb out the fucking window*. He smooths his t-shirt down and the sunlight catches on the piece of metal around his ring finger, bouncing off the ring. Richie's eyes follow the movement, his hand automatically moving to feel the matching one on his own finger. They bought the rings for each other as a best friend gift for Christmas two years ago, and he's been wearing it ever since.

He's about to speak again but the warning bell cuts him off, silencing anything he might've said or considered saying. They all gather their things and inch their way inside, unwilling and tired. Junior year sure is a lot more work than the years before – they're all kind of strung out. Bill is the one who looks the most stressed because out of all of them he's in the most AP classes (something Richie could've also done but didn't want to, stupidly). As exhausted as they are, it is Friday. Eight more hours and they're free.

*

"Good evening ladies and gentlemen! We are called Gifted and this was our song *You don't know*," Richie shouts into his microphone after jamming his head off during the first song. The amplification in this place is shit, but they've learned to tune themselves to it since they play in this particular club of Derry quite often. "Before I forget, we are also playing here on Halloween so make sure to come check us out!"

He adjusts his mic stand while Beverly greets the crowd (*crowd*,

Richie scoffs internally; there are hardly 50 people here, including the staff. It's still better than nothing though) and introduces the next song. He clamps a capo onto the neck of his guitar and gets ready to rock his heart out like he always does. Ben does a count-in with his drumsticks and Richie gets lost in the music as soon as he strums the first chord.

He doesn't see Eddie in the crowd and he tries not to let it get to him; for now, he will forget about it. For now, he just wants to play.

Even with the shitty amps they use, Bev's voice sounds fucking amazing. Raw, full of soul. A diamond in the rough. It makes his lyrics come to life in ways Richie could never make happen on his own – and that's why they have each other as a band. Ben's the base of it all behind the drums, gives a beat that Jack's bass line can follow, then comes Richie, laying his chords onto the rhythm and Bev's voice is like the cherry on top. None of them could do it without each other; that's the beauty of it all. Richie honestly thinks they're creating something that could last – if only they'd get better fucking gigs at better fucking venues.

*

The opportunity presents itself sooner than he would've ever thought in the form of Wiktor Knechciak, lead singer of Portland's hottest underground alt-rock band, Bloodbeat. Turns out, he's been there in the crowd the entire time – what the ever-loving fuck he's doing here beats Richie – and now that it's over Richie somehow finds himself talking to the guy he's looked up to for a year now. Because Wiktor actually liked their performance. What are the fucking odds? What the fuck is happening?

So that's how the band is invited to play with Bloodbeat in Portland on the 31st of October. Which means they will have to cancel their show here, but it shouldn't be a big deal – Halloween is a month away still, they can schedule someone else to play in this shithole of a club. Bev is over the moon with happiness; she kisses Ben on the mouth in her excitement, which leaves the drummer boy blushing under the club lights. Cute.

As if he night couldn't get any better, Richie turns around and spots

Eddie Kaspbrak at the bar. He's alone at the moment, looking awfully out of place in his light blue jeans and white shirt, so Richie goes up to him. He's still buzzing with the adrenaline of performing, so he stalks right up in Eddie's space and lifts him off the bar stool he's seated on.

"Hey what the—!" Eddie exclaims. "Put me down, Richie!"

"Nah," Richie tells him. "I quite like you where you are."

"Put me the fuck down or so help me—" Eddie continues, but he also knows it's hard to take someone seriously when they're as small and unthreatening as him. "Are you deaf? Or just stupid?"

Richie pouts, putting Eddie down. "You're stupid."

"Yeah, nice comeback, idiot."

"If I wanted a comeback I'd just wipe it off your mom's chin."

"*RICHIE TOZIER—*" Richie knows better than to remain in Eddie's personal space – he cackles as he dances away from his friend's reaching zone, pulling out chairs behind him as he goes so Eddie has a harder time catching up to him.

He bumps into Wiktor as he's fleeing. The guy is big, not taller than Richie himself but much wider and has muscles the size of Richie's head. His blonde hair is messy but something about it gives away he actually spent time on making it look just the *right kind* of messy, that's the vibe he gives off.

"Hey, can I talk to you?" Wiktor asks and Richie nods immediately. Right now this guy seems to be the key to their success - Richie would give him a kidney if he asked. "Sorry, I'll just borrow him for a while," Wiktor shoots a wink towards Eddie who is just catching up to Richie now. He answers a weak *sure* but the guy is already halfway to the backstage with his friend.

"What are you frowning about?" A not-so-sober Stan slams into him, and really, what is he frowning for? Eddie shakes his head as if to get any negative impulses out of it before they materialize into actual thoughts.

“Nothing,” he smiles at Stan and they join Bill at the bar for shots.

He doesn't see Richie for the rest of the night.

Notes for the Chapter:

this is 100% self-indulgent. no one asked for this yet
here i am writing it

this is just an introduction, really, the story is going
to get more interesting i swear

anyways i hope you like it! this is somewhere
between canon and au - they're all in Derry attending
high school together but Pennywise happened and
they all have the same family background and
personality traits as in the actual story so yeah.

please tell me what you think! also this is unbeta'd,
pls point out any mistakes you find x

(also posted on my tumblr)

2. Two

This is it, Eddie thinks. This is how I die.

Currently he is being held down while Henry Bowers kicks him with his dirty shoes wherever he can and pleases. Eddie is trying his best to assume the fetal position and protect his head, but Belch Huggins and Victor Criss are doing a great job at keeping his arms and legs away from his torso. Henry is going all out, not holding back any force whatsoever and it hurts. It hurts like a bitch, it's unlike anything Eddie has ever seen or felt before. Eddie has wondered before what he will feel like in his last minutes on Earth, what will go through his head. He didn't quite imagine it like this. On an otherwise nice Friday too, of all things.

This guy is not normal, he thinks, he's fucked up in the head, get away, break free, escape, GET AWAY—

He is suddenly sitting next to a tree and everything aches. Henry Bowers is gone, but the feel of him isn't; the sensation of being kicked, punched all over lingers. He curls in on himself on instinct. His clothes have dirt all over them and so does Eddie, some blood mixing into the mixture on his tanned skin. He doesn't know if it's his, but it better fucking be.

“Wha—what...”

“He's gone,” Beverly enters his view, her blurry face slowly coming into focus. She is kneeling next to him with a bottle of water and a cafeteria napkin. “You were unconscious when we pulled you out from under him.”

He doesn't get it. “Why the fuck does he have to go here?”

Eddie could normally handle Henry and his ugly gang – on foot, he was faster than all of them and almost always ran away before they could get him, even if it meant risking an asthma attack. This time, however he didn't see them coming, and Bowers' boot was in his face before he knew it.

“Fucking coward,” he snaps. “Can’t even hit me properly without his ass-kissers.”

“That’s what he does,” Beverly agrees while cleaning some of his newly acquired bruises and cuts. She pulls out a small bottle of iodine and applies it to the worst looking areas. “I took this from your fanny pack. Hope you don’t mind.”

“Thank you, Bev,” Eddie croaks out. After he’s gathered enough strength, he limps away clinging onto his friend for dear life. Beverly walks him home (even carries his damn bag, that’s how amazing she is) and hands him to his mother, who of course flips the fuck out. Why wouldn’t she? Even a normal mother would be worried with the state Eddie is in – now multiply that by a hundred and you get a hyperventilating Sonia Kaspbrak.

Eddie just wants to go to sleep and wake up to a better day.

*

By the time he sleeps off the shock of it all it’s dark outside and it feels like a storm is coming. Well, the wind must be blowing at least because a tree branch keeps making noise on his window.

Except...

Eddie trips over his feet as he hurls himself at the window and pulls it open, revealing a rather cold Richie Tozier. So *this* is what woke him up.

“I’m sorry but, what the fuck are you doing here? My *mom* is sleeping downstairs. Do you want me to end up actually dead?”

Richie just chuckles. “Don’t worry, I’ll cure her out of her hysteria. The mystery method is called *An Orgasm*,” he puts his hand up and proceeds to high-five himself since years of experience have thought him Eddie won’t.

“Shut up.” For the first time that day, Eddie looks at Richie somewhat better. Even in the dim light streaming in from outside through the window, it’s hard to miss the bruises blooming across Richie’s face, his wrists, his neck. “What happened to you?”

His voice sounds way softer and quieter than he intended, but he lets it go to make way for thoughts of worry. Richie looks truly awful, like he had his lights knocked out pretty good just like Eddie. Ugly patches of purple and blue lay across his skin, angry and deep in color, in contrast with his fair complexion. Eddie is tanner than Richie but he bets he doesn't look any better. What a pair of losers they are, he thinks with a bittersweet curl of his lips.

"Eddie-o, do you honestly think I wouldn't go after Bowers after what he did to you? I'm bigger than him now," Richie cheerfully tells his friend like picking a fight with Henry willingly isn't a synonym for suicide attempt. Eddie is, for the second time since he opened the goddamned window, rendered speechless.

"You saw that?" His mouth quivers.

Richie is striding across his room now, dropping down onto the bed – the mattress gives a creak of protest but then welcomes Richie's weight like an old friend. He knows better than to put his shoes up onto Eddie's sheets so his feet are dangling off the side. "Of course I saw," he whispers. "I was the one who pulled him off of you. He would've kept going otherwise."

Eddie sits down where Richie's legs are bent away from the bed, picking at the skin around his nails. "Thank you," he starts. Then, "I honestly thought he was going to kill me. This time I really believed it." It's shocking to say it out loud and the reality of it settles heavily onto his chest, threatening to crush him dare he dwell on it for too long.

Richie just smiles up at him, moonlight illuminating the side of his face.

"I would never let that happen, Eds."

*

Richie manages to sneak out in the morning without Eddie's mom noticing, thank fuck, but when Eddie wants to tag along for the usual band practice he kind of blows him off.

"It's not that I don't want you there," Richie fidgets with his sleeves. "It's just, the guys from Bloodbeat are going to be there, and they wanted kind of a chill session with just the two bands."

Eddie finds that fucking weird, but okay.

"Next time, though." Richie promises.

"Sure," Eddie answers with a half-hearted smile, and before he can add anything else Richie is already gone from his window and halfway across the street.

Mike comes over later in the afternoon to invite Eddie out biking and they meet Stan as well. The three of them spend the afternoon together playing at the arcade, biking around in the October sun and getting ice cream. Stan freaks out because he manages to get it all over himself and demands they go home right away, which then results in an impromptu sleepover. Eddie has a feeling Stan's dad doesn't exactly like any of his son's friends but he's never shown it directly so he shuts up about it. They're allowed in the household and everyone is polite and nice to them so from here it's not his problem if something crawled up Stan's dad's ass and died.

They eat dinner in Stan's room, a rare occasion; normally they would all be called downstairs because *we don't walk around with our food, Stanley*, but his parents are having someone over so they're allowed to eat dinner in the bedroom. After they all take turns showering and pile blankets and pillows on the floor that make for a pretty nice makeshift bed, they lie in the darkness and just talk until they fall asleep, like old times.

"Should we dress up as the three musketeers for Halloween?"

"No."

"Maybe we should dress up as each other."

"No one would recognize us then. We all basically wear the same clothes."

"Do you guys think there are cows in space? Like not actual cows but similar animals that somehow developed on another planet

that *look* like cows?”

“...Go to sleep, Stanley.”

*

Eddie's wounds heal and so do Richie's; the bruises linger for an extended time on Richie's skin, only fading completely a week after Eddie's own aren't visible anymore. He doesn't know why he's so bitter every time Richie goes to hang out with his new musician buddies, but something's just off about the whole thing. It's like he cares more about his image than his friends now – hell, he barely has time to hang out anymore outside of school. At least Bev still makes plans with all of them, but Richie just excuses himself every day for the entire week to *hang with the guys* or *jam with Wiktor* – ugh. Eddie wants to scowl every time he hears that name now.

Bev doesn't seem to mind as much, but she sees all their expressions when Richie leaves for the nth time to do whatever he does with his new buddies.

“I told him I don't want to hang out with them because they're assholes,” Bev confesses to them on Thursday. “They didn't want you guys at the practices anymore because they think... well, they don't think you're cool enough. I mean—”

“They think we're losers,” Mike cuts in.

Ben just scoffs. “We are. But that shouldn't stop anyone from coming to band practice. You should all come next time. I don't want to exclude my friends from things just because we're suddenly friends with some mediocre band from the city.”

Eddie chuckles. Take that, Wiktor.

*

So they all go to band practice that weekend, even though Bloodbeat is also there. It's in a studio in town that belongs to Mike's granddad – it used to be just a garage they piled up stuff they didn't need in, but after helping to clean it out the group had earned the right to hang out and play music in it.

This is nowhere near Gifted, Eddie thinks as Bloodbeat finishes their first song. They must've gotten lucky because this shit they're playing will never be as good as what my friends do.

It's not even a biased opinion, it's just the truth. Wiktor Knechciak either talks into the microphone or squeals into it like a pig while the two guitars and drum do whatever-the-fuck in the background. Richie has explained to him that chaos is what punk is all about but Eddie couldn't care less. If the music sucks, then it sucks. If someone likes to rock out with their socks out to the sounds of a pig slaughter, good for them.

"So how didya like it, shortie?" the mop of messy blond hair asks him.

"Don't—don't call me that." Eddie answers, not as confident as he would like to sound. Wiktor is intimidating and his initial reaction is to avoid any confrontation with the guy.

"What should I call you then?" The guy is smiling and hey, he might be an ass but maybe... maybe he's not that bad. Maybe Eddie is overreacting.

"Uh, my name? Eddie?"

"Okay, Eddie," Wiktor plops down next to him as Ben takes his place behind the drum kit. Gifted is getting ready to play some songs while the guys from Bloodbeat settle down on one of the two couches. "Tell me, how old are you? You don't look a second older than fifteen. Why are you hanging out with these guys?"

The fucking nerve this guy has.

"I'm actually almost eighteen, so. That's why," he answers, tone as friendly as he can muster in that moment. It is an achievement in itself considering that in that moment he is so irritated by Wiktor he could crawl up the wall.

"Really? I'm gonna have to keep calling you shortie then," he mocks. "Or maybe I'll call you princess: just look at that pink shirt you're wearing." He is referring to yet another one of Eddie's never-ending

supply of button-ups. He likes them, okay? Beats being some blond hobo-looking punk.

Eddie is ready to really open his mouth and give this guy a piece of his mind but then he hears Ben counting in – and he turns his head to Gifted, where Bev is just getting into her first notes and Richie... Richie is lost in the music, as he always is, it being the only time he can manage to let out as much energy as he wants. He always looks amazing in Eddie's eyes but with a guitar in his hand he is something else entirely.

Eddie watches with bittersweet thoughts as Richie nails every single tone and chord, curls bouncing all around and his glasses almost sliding off his long nose. Some might say he looks goofy but Eddie thinks he looks amazing. He gets lost in the performance and doesn't see the side-eye Knechciak is giving him – and even if he would've noticed, he doesn't think he could have looked away from Richie in those minutes, because he was as captivating as any shooting star or sunrise, over before you can soak it all in.

Notes for the Chapter:

aaaaaaaaahhhhhh i'm finally here with the second chapter!! please tell me how you liked this and don't be afraid to point out any mistakes you find as this is not beta'd
also posted on my tumblr (finnsjack)!
hmu with prompts hehehe

3. Three

“You know what I think?” Mike asks. It’s the weekend and they are at the quarry, the six of them sitting in a circle with a bottle of something being passed around. There are three tents set up behind them, a desperate attempt to get away from the world for a little while. Richie is nowhere to be seen. “I think that guy has a thing for Richie.”

“Yeah, no shit,” Eddie answers, suddenly very irritated. “I bet he’s with him right now. I just don’t know, like, I *don’t get* what Richie likes in him.”

“Yeah, it’s kind of weird,” Beverly agrees. “I don’t want to talk shit behind his back, but... he turns into a different Richie when Bloodbeat is around. He adapts his style to theirs, in a way but it’s like he’s a completely different person.”

Eddie thinks the whole thing is weird, suspicious even. Why the fuck is this band so special that Richie is willing to bend and break and change his entire style just to appeal to them? What does he see in them? All Eddie sees is a group of smelly, dirty punks who can’t even play good music. Why would anyone want to be like them?

As the sun descends behind the trees and the hills, they all transfer from tipsy to drunk, laughing until their stomachs hurt and their heads spin.

“God, I wish we’d never have to go back,” Bev sighs, looking up at them. Her head is resting on Mike’s thigh, the boy adjusting every once in a while so his leg doesn’t fall asleep. “I feel much better when it’s just you guys. No expectations to live up to, and no judgemental looks, I love it.”

Eddie couldn’t help but agree and he could see some of the others nodding their heads as well. He imagined what it would be like to be Beverly, beautiful, strong, messed up Beverly. His life would instantly be come more exciting, that’s for sure, but at what cost?

He falls asleep next to Bill with his head spinning, only Stan and

Mike still outside. He thinks he hears them say something about him, and about Richie, but then again he's drunk – he could very well be just dreaming it. He seems to be dreaming of Richie often these days.

*

Halloween comes faster than Eddie would've thought – the day before he still doesn't know what the hell he should dress up as – but that's not all that's here. Eddie's mom is also constantly here, having picked up a hobby for knitting while watching TV. Now she's back to being in the house at all times instead of some neighboring house to gossip and frankly, Eddie is not having it. He's *not* going to sneak out again; he is going to walk out the front door like any 17 year old would do. He's done it before and he will do it again.

He spends the night putting his costume together, a last-minute thing that popped into his head as he was thrift shopping. He found some denim overalls that were precisely his size, a striped t-shirt and some sneakers and boom, he was—

“Chucky!” Beverly shouts when she arrives at his house the next day. “That’s such a good idea! Can I do your makeup?”

“Sure,” Eddie nods. “Only a few stitches though. I'm not trying to look like a half-rotten corpse.”

Beverly just rolls her eyes and gets to work.

*

“My God Eds, you look too cute for your own good,” is Richie's first reaction when they meet up in front of Bill's house. Eddie managed to

leave the house with minimal arguing and shouting, through the front door just like he planned. He hates standing up against his mom, but practice makes perfect.

“And you look like an idiot. What are you even supposed to be?”

Richie strikes a pose. He's wearing black pants and a tight, thin-striped tee with a red scarf around his neck. His face is painted white with black makeup on it and he's holding a – baguette? “French Kiss! I think I look swell, Eddie Spaghetti.”

“God, stop with the French accent, you egg.”

Richie of course just amps it up, now also flailing his hands around, as if that's what French people do. “You can call me Rrrichie, *Monsieur*, no need for God – anyways, wait til you see the others! I am only one fourth of French Kiss, you know.”

As much as Eddie would like to make fun of it, the tight shirt that's clinging Richie's torso does things to him he wouldn't like to discuss right now so he just ends up rolling his eyes and turning away. They all pile into Richie's car – Bev, Mike, Stan and him – while the others are already on their way to Portland with most of their equipment, since Ben's mom has a minivan that can carry all that shit. Richie's piece of shit car would probably just break in half under the weight.

Beverly looks great in an outfit very similar to Richie's, except that she's wearing a skirt and her face is painted as another Kiss member's. Eddie is not sure who, he would have to ask one of them if he wanted to know. He's not the rock and roll expert and he's not claiming to be; his music taste falls more in the line of Ben's who, despite the fact that he plays in a punk rock band, listens to New Kids On The Block and Madonna (Eddie himself is a big fan of Boy George and, most importantly, David Bowie but only really admits it to Ben – if he were to try and discuss it with anyone else in this shithole of a town he would probably get beaten up for being a *fag*).

Mike and Stan are dressed as Ghostbusters because for one, they're nerds and two, Mike's cousin had the costumes lying around since last Halloween and they had to come up with an idea in the last minute just like Eddie.

“You two look awfully handsome,” Eddie compliments them from the backseat where he’s sandwiched between Bev and Mike, to which they start to swoon mockingly. “Don’t they, Bev?”

“They really do, but just you wait until you see French Kiss in its full glory,” she winks from across her shoulder.

“I hate this pun so much,” Eddie grumbles but has to admit it is a nice band costume.

*

The crowd loves Gifted. That is a fact that becomes obvious about halfway through their first song – most of the people in this place obviously came to see Bloodbeat (some of the punk girls are even wearing handmade band merch) but as Bev’s voice fills up the space, there are people suddenly swarming the floor hoping to see more of the stage. The place has a second floor, it’s like a loft that goes all around, allowing anyone up there to oversee the entire club beneath them. That’s where normally only the bands playing and any “insiders” are let up, so as friends of Gifted that’s where Eddie ends up sitting with the others while Bev and her boys rip up the stage – honestly, Eddie knew his friends were good but he didn’t know they could make the crowd go so wild, probably because they hardly ever played for an actual *crowd* before. He’s so proud of them he could burst with energy, or maybe that has to do with the vodka in his drink – God knows he doesn’t care. He sees that Richie is the same way, he looks ecstatic with all the people cheering for them. This is what he lives for in that moment and Eddie knows it’s what he really wants to live for for the rest of his life Richie is your typical guy with a guitar who wants to change the world, except he will actually get to do it. Eddie is sure about that.

When they finish their set they leave a stunned crowd behind. With questions of “Who are they?” and “Where are they playing next?” being thrown around like crazy, Eddie is sure they just broke through something, and even if it’s only something small and even if it won’t

change the world, it's still a big step for them.

They all collapse around the table after clearing their shit off the stage to make room for the next band. There are strangers all around congratulating them but they only really hear their friends – Mike shouting excitedly about how the crowd went *wild*, Stan pondering about how many more gigs they will now get and Eddie hyping them up further – honestly, how could he not? Anyone with eyes and ears can see they're something else.

"I'm gonna go get a drink," Richie announces and grabs Eddie's empty glass as well. "You want something?"

"Wait," Eddie scrambles off the chair, a bit tipsy already. "I'll come with."

Once they're at the bar, Richie orders a beer for himself and something with vodka for Eddie (that's literally what Eddie tells him when he asks what he'd like, *something with vodka*) before helping the smaller boy onto a barstool just so he can sit. "Are you drunk?" he asks, steadying the boy with a hand on his back and Eddie feels warm, "No," he answers. "Just tipsy."

"Good, because I'm planning to get smashed and I wouldn't want you out too early."

Richie flashes him a grin before taking a swig of his beer and steps even closer, arm all the way around Eddie now, thumb pressed lightly into his side. Eddie sips away at whatever his glass is filled with, and honestly? That's the bad thing about vodka, it's a sneaky bitch. Mix it with sparkling water or something sweet and you won't even realize it's really there – well, until you're suddenly throwing up behind a dumpster with your head spinning, that is.

For now though he just enjoys himself; enjoys his drink and the conversation he has with Richie, enjoys the laughs and jokes when their friends come around to order and leave to hang in the crowd while Bloodbeat plays. Enjoys the feeling of Richie's arm around him, extremely smug when he sees some girls eyeing his friend but not coming up to him, scooting even closer to get the message of *back the fuck off* across clear. Enjoys that fucking Wiktor is not here right now

but on the stage, jumping around like an orangutan. It might sound petty and clingy but a few drinks in he couldn't care less.

The conversation shifts from mindless things to drunken thoughts pretty quickly and Richie's remarks turn suggestive, letting Eddie's hazy mind wander – he knows there's something... *something* between them, he knows it's been there for a long time. Richie knows it too, it hangs unspoken between them whenever they get drunk or high and are left together alone; but they never act on it. Alcohol makes people lower their guard, makes them bolder and courageous – makes Richie circle his thumb where he has his hand on Eddie's side, makes him grip just a little harder when Eddie licks his lips or laughs up at him. Makes Eddie bite his lower lip when he knows Richie is looking at him, makes him slide his finger into one of the boy's belt loops. But that's... that's about what they allow themselves to do, or have ever allowed before. It is a known truth, however that it could turn into more in the blink of an eye at any given moment. Eddie doesn't know what to call it and doesn't know why they never acknowledge it but he will milk everything he can out of it. It's weird, how Richie has quite literally wound Eddie around his little finger but it is what it is, Eddie has come to terms with it.

It doesn't make the bittersweet feeling of wanting more go away but hey, nothing in this world is perfect.

*

When they finally get home – Bev and Ben are the designated drivers, making sure everyone gets home safe – Eddie decides to crash at Richie's place, since he would rather chop off his own hand before going home to his mother in a state like this. He strips off the overalls and pulls on one of Richie's shirts which is too big but smells like him. It's a long shirt, comes down mid-thigh so Eddie forgoes the pants and wears just his boxers underneath, and his traitorous half-asleep mind doesn't miss the way Richie eyes the skin on display.

They fall asleep like they always do, next to each other except this

time Richie's arm snakes around Eddie's frame, pulling him into his chest from behind. The bed is so, so comfortable and he can feel Richie's breath on the back of his neck but before Eddie can think any more of it he falls asleep.

Notes for the Chapter:

WELL HELLO THERE. it's still Halloween where I live for a whopping 40 minutes so I figured it would be appropriate to post this now.

hope you enjoy!!

also posted on my tumblr (finnsjack)

i live for your comments so please don't spare me your thoughts he he he